



San
Joaquin
River
Management
Program

P.O. Box 942836, Sacramento, CA 94236-0001

April 26, 2001

Ms. Nettie R. Drake
P/SC CRMP Coordinator
Panoche/Silver Creek Coordinate Resource
Management and Planning Team
29415 Ruth Hill Road
Squaw Valley, California 93675

Dear Ms. Drake:

I am writing in support of the Panoche/Silver Creek Watershed Assessment for the Silver Creek Drainage and the alluvial fan to the Mendota Pool.

The San Joaquin River Management Program provides a forum to identify problems and solutions to issues related to wildlife, flood protection, water quality, water supply, fisheries, and recreation. The SJRMP Action Team and Advisory Council have reviewed and discussed this proposal.

The Advisory Council supports the PSCW assessment proposed by the Westside Resources Conservation District, et al, and understands that this project will provide information to landowners and interested parties, increasing their ability to understand the current conditions within the watershed.

The 1995 San Joaquin River Management Plan recommends projects that increase public awareness regarding the value of the San Joaquin River watershed and its resources. The implementation of this assessment will also support the development of solutions that address flood protection and water quality issues.

If you have any questions in this regard, please contact Paula Landis, Action Team Chair, at (559) 230-3310.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Ramirez'.

Tim Ramirez, Advisory Council Chair
San Joaquin River Management Program

**SUPPORTING
DOCUMENTATION
IS ON THE
FOLLOWING PAGES**

CONCEPT PROPOSAL FORM II

For proposals with emphasis on watershed assessment, monitoring, and/or on-the-ground projects

Use this form to describe your concept for a proposal or project to apply to the CALFED Watershed Program for funding support. Use only the space provided, leaving at least a half inch margin with type size no smaller than 10 points. These guidelines are also available in electronic format on the Watershed Program web site:

baydeltawatershed.org

Project and Applicant Information:

Name of project: Panoche/Silver Creek Watershed Assessment for the Silver Creek Drainage and the alluvial fan to the Mendota Pool.	Budget Estimate: Funds requested: \$200,000 Match (cash & inkind): TOTAL: \$200,000
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Project Applicants(s) and/or Principal Investigator(s) and affiliation(s) – use an additional sheet if necessary:

- | | | |
|--|---|-------------------------|
| - Westside Resources Conservation District (Lead Agency) | - Ranchers in the Upper Watershed | - Local Water Districts |
| - California Department of Water Resources | - Farmers in the Lower Watershed | |
| - U.S. Bureau of Reclamation | - U.S. Bureau of Land Management | |
| - City Officials and Residents of Mendota | - California Department of Transportation | |
| - Fresno County Public Works Department | - Natural Resources Conservation Service | |
| - California State University, Fresno | - Silver Creek Drainage District | |

Project manager or contact person, address, telephone and email (if fiscal agent is different, provide that information, also):

Westside Resource Conservation District Attn: Mr. Morris A. Martin, Project Manager 3763 E. Robinson Fresno, CA 93726-5917 Phone (559) 227-2489 Fax (559) 227-0215	Panoche/Silver Creek Coordinate Resource Management and Planning team Attn: Nettie R. Drake, Contact Person 29415 Ruth Hill Rd. Squaw Valley, CA 93675 (559) 332-2837 or (559)289-4928 nrdrake@psnw.com
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Project Abstract (include the county, watershed or other geographic reference):

The Panoche/Silver Creek Watershed is located in the Coastal Range of the San Joaquin Valley, 35 miles west of Fresno, CA. The upper third of the watershed is in San Benito County and the lower two-thirds are in Fresno County. The watershed is approximately 300,000 acres and ranges in elevation from 100 to 5,000 feet above sea level. The Panoche/Silver Creek Coordinated Resources Management and Planning (P/SC CRMP) is an ongoing process designed to serve as a forum for private landowners and public agencies to address natural resource concerns within and around the watershed. The goal of the P/SC CRMP is to develop and implement a coordinated plan for sustained utilization of watershed resources.

The focus of this project is to assess two separate sub-watersheds within the Panoche/Silver Creek watershed (PSCW). This assessment will cover the Silver Creek Drainage and the alluvial fan of the PSCW; this area is from the intersection of Panoche Creek and Belmont Avenue down to the Mendota Pool and San Joaquin River.

The assessments will determine the current resource condition of the two designated areas and then develop best management practices (BMPs) for these areas in relation to the other work currently being completed. These BMPs will be integrated to create an overall Watershed Management Plan for the PSCW.

If your concept proposal is not selected for further consideration in this round of funding, would you like referral to other possible funding sources? YES ☒ NO ☐

1. Describe your anticipated outcome, or what you plan to achieve, and what practices or programs you intend to use. If a construction project, include the basis for selecting this particular type of construction and/or site location.

The proposed work will include:

- ❖ Gathering baseline information from monitoring program concerning the current natural resource condition of these two sub-watersheds. This information may include what vegetation exists, the sediment and trace element loads during flood events, soil conditions, channel conditions and wildlife populations.
- ❖ A determination of Best Management Practices (BMPs) for these sub-watersheds in concert with the other work currently being completed in the watershed. Once the BMPs are identified, a specific management action plan will be developed.

The practices to be used to gather the information during the assessment will be:

- 1) A literature review of any work completed in either sub-watershed to date.
- 2) Field assessment of current natural resource conditions.
- 3) Appropriate modeling, where necessary, for erosion rates, sediment loading and hydrology.
- 4) Through the use of the professional staff hired to do the assessments, best management practices will be developed.

2. Describe the level of community involvement and activity anticipated in this project, including the following elements:

- a. How will your activity promote community and landowner involvement in design, implementation and management or maintenance?

The P/SC CRMP has worked for the past five years developing a positive, trusting, open communication relationship with both the landowners and agencies living and working in this watershed. Every project in the PSCW has been initiated by the landowners. There are positive working relationships with the landowners from the development of ideas to the implementation of projects throughout the watershed. The strength behind this is the landowner's desire for the projects and improvement to the resource concerns. The City of Mendota is eagerly becoming more involved with the Panoche/Silver Creek Watershed CRMP.

- b. What level of support is there from the local community and agencies and tribal governments?

There are approximately 190 landowners and 40 public agencies, Local, State and Federal, who play a part in this watershed. The CRMP holds a monthly Steering Committee Meeting in the City of Mendota that is attended by interested landowners and agencies. The P/SC CRMP has been active in this watershed for the past five years and every month attracts more involvement from landowners.

c. What level of cooperation exists if the proposal requires access to private lands?

There is a positive working relationship between the Panoche/Silver Creek CRMP and the community. The landowners, residents and City Officials of Mendota and the have a desire to be a part of the solution to the flooding, erosion and sediment transport that effects their lands and livelihood. The landowners have come to the CRMP and requested projects to be developed for their land. There are currently 11 projects that are being initiated in the watershed as a result of the work already completed by the CRMP. Three projects are on the ground and each of the landowners or land managers for these projects have signed a 10 year operation and maintenance agreement before the project started.

d. How will the activity foster collaboration among multiple interests, and/or meet multiple objectives?

All parties have a direct interest in the flooding, erosion and sediment that effects the watershed. Therefor the landowners and the City of Mendota are open to working together with other public, local, State and Federal agencies, to assess and create BMPs that will lead to solutions to the natural resource issues.

e. What environmental compliance permits, such as CEQA or NEPA, and other approvals may be necessary to implement your project? What permits have been obtained? Are permitting agencies involved with project design?

The focus of this proposal is to do an assessment and create BMPs. The need for environmental compliance permits will be limited, and will be addressed in the Full Proposal phase.

f. How will the activity contribute to watershed improvement beyond the immediate implementation site?

The information obtained through this assessment will further improve the understanding of the dynamics of these two sub-watersheds. This information will also increase the landowners ability to understand the current conditions of the natural resource concerns and motivate them to increase their level of participation.

g. What are the potential benefits to the local community, and how will those benefits be measured?

The benefits will be reduction in flooding, sediment transport and improved water quality. This result will be an economical benefit to the communities within the watershed. The CRMP surveyed landowners and the City of Mendota to quantify damages and costs due to the flooding. The report has some good economic information, but an assessment of the proposed areas is needed to complete a comprehensive management plan. Once the plan is created and implemented, economic effects can be monitored.

h. What impacts do you anticipate from your project implementation in other portions of the community?

This project will have a positive effect on the landowners of the ranches, farms, residents of Mendota, the City of Mendota, and improve water quality in the San Joaquin River. This project will allow for a management plan that will identify solutions for the water quality problems that are affecting the San Joaquin River. Panoche Creek is a tributary to the San Joaquin River; improvements in the Panoche/Silver Creek watershed will assist the CALFED Bay-Delta Program in achieving the goal of reducing the effects that inhibit ecological processes, habitats and species in the Bay-Delta ecosystem.

i. How does your project promote local community involvement with the continued development and implementation of the CALFED Bay Delta Program?

The local watershed group (P/SC CRMP) provides strong leadership to those affected by the erosion, sediment transport and flooding to the Mendota Pool and San Joaquin River.

3. Describe the methods used to determine the estimated costs of your project, including a cost estimate on environmental compliance.

The cost has been estimated based on the past work completed by the CRMP for other assessments of sub-watersheds within the PSCW. Additional input was given from Environmental Engineering firm of MFG, Inc. who will be used to complete the assessments. The CRMP has a strong positive working relationship with this organization, as this was the firm that has done the most recent assessment of the Panoche/Silver Creek confluence and sedimentation study. The environmental compliance is not an issue for this assessment.

4. Describe how the proposal promotes one or more of the initial implementation priorities of the Watershed Program (see Section 5).

- ❖ CALFED's priorities for the first funding cycle include development of watershed assessments and plans.

The focus of this proposal is to assess the existing conditions of the two remaining unassisted sub-watersheds within the Panoche/Silver Creek watershed. These assessments are imperative so a practical, economical management plan can be established to address the resource concerns. These proposed assessments and plans will be integrated with areas previously assessed and will complete the management plan for the entire watershed.

- ❖ CALFED's priorities for the first funding cycle include building local community capacity to assess and effectively manage watersheds that affect the Bay-Delta system.

The Panoche/Silver Creek watershed has an active CRMP program that has continually worked to include all the landowners and other interested parties into the process of planning and implementation. This project will further allow the CRMP to engage with more of the landowners and complete the watershed management plan for the entire PSCW.

5. Describe how your proposal will establish or enhance a partnership between the local community and the CALFED Bay Delta Program.

This proposed project will establish an additional partnership between the local community and CALFED by including more of the landowners into the process of the CRMP. Currently the P/SC CRMP is working with CALFED and the landowners in and around the Big Panoche Valley to develop projects to address the erosion and sediment transport concerns in that sub-watershed. This proposed project will allow for this relationship to expand to the Silver Creek Drainage and the alluvial fan.

6. Describe how your project will promote information exchange, including project monitoring and the transfer of technical information, among CALFED and others interested in watershed management.

The P/SC CRMP has been actively involved with the CALFED Watershed Workgroup, the California Biodiversity Council Watershed workgroup and the Watershed Management Council over the past five years. This proposed project will enable the CRMP to further inform these various groups of the environmental and agricultural dynamics of this part of the CALFED solution area, the western San Joaquin Valley. In addition, the information generated will be posted on NEPI and U.C. Davis ICE.

7. Describe here any other important aspects of your program that you could not address in the above items, and that you feel are critical to fully describing your concept.

The Panoche/Silver Creek CRMP has received funding for assessments and project implementation that has covered a portion of the watershed. The list of accomplishments include:

- ❖ EPA/RWCQB 205 (j) grant for a Sedimentation Study
- ❖ CALFED grant to develop an upper watershed management plan
- ❖ CALFED and Clean Water Act 319h grants to implement projects

In order to properly manage any watershed, it is imperative to fully understand the natural resource dynamics of that watershed. The PSCW is approximately 300,000 acres and has some of the most dramatic resource concerns in the state. There have been assessments completed in other parts of this watershed, but because of the size of this watershed, (approximately 300,000 acres), the assessments have had to be completed in sections, not one entire assessment. It is believed that the Silver Creek Drainage is a primary source of selenium and water quality problems. This proposed project would complete the entire watershed assessment and enable the CRMP and its participants to develop and implement a collaborative, comprehensive watershed management plan.

Do you anticipate a desire for possible technical assistance from CALFED to fully develop your proposal? Y ☒ N _____.
If yes, what type of assistance do you anticipate?

1. Assistance with monitoring planning
2. Assistance with environmental compliance issues for future BMP implementation.
3. Examples of format for the QAPP for future BMP implementation.
4. Assistance from CALFED's Science Program
5. Assistance developing a budget